

ABSTRACT OF THE INVENTION

A network interface includes a network medium interface operatively coupled to a software device driver arrangement, with a legacy media access controller (MAC) therebetween. The device driver arrangement includes a legacy MAC device driver configured to communicate with the legacy MAC, and an intermediate driver configured to communicate with the network medium interface. The intermediate driver and the network medium interface may communicate with one another by use of special frames, for example to send and receive control information. The special frames are formatted to pass through the legacy MAC, and include an identifier so that they can be identified at the intended destination, either the intermediate driver or the network medium interface. Upon identification, the control information is extracted at the destination. The network medium interface may include one or more MACs as well as one or more physical layer devices (PHYs).

G:\DOCUMENT\JP\AMDS\IP354US\IP0354US.APP.wpd